

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.

An engine control device for a vehicle, the vehicle having an engine, an automatic transmission receiving an output torque of the engine, a drive shaft for transmitting an output torque from the automatic transmission to the vehicle wheels and a shift lever for selecting the operating range of the automatic transmission; wherein the operating range of the automatic transmission includes a stationary range in which the engine output torque is not transmitted to a side of the drive shaft and a running range in which the engine output torque is transmitted to the side of the drive shaft, and a shift lever position includes a stationary range position corresponding to the stationary range of the automatic transmission and a running range position corresponding to the running range of the automatic transmission; the engine control device comprising:

a torque control mechanism for regulating the engine output torque, the torque control mechanism including at least one of a fuel injector for injecting fuel and a throttle valve for regulating an intake air amount to the engine;

a sensor for detecting the shift lever position;

and a controller comprising a microcomputer; the controller being programmed to:

detect a shift in the shift lever position from the stationary range position to the running range position based on the shift lever position; and

transmit a first command signal to the torque control mechanism when a first predetermined period elapses after the detection of the shift in the shift

lever position, the command signal increasing the engine output torque by a predetermined correction gain from a first output torque at the detection of the shift lever position to a second output torque.

2.

The engine control device as defined in Claim 1, wherein the controller is further programmed to wait until the second predetermined period elapses after the transmission of the first signal and then transmit a second command signal for decreasing the engine output torque to the first output torque to the torque control mechanism.

3.

The engine control device as defined in Claim 1, wherein the first predetermined period is a period after the shift in the shift lever position until the completion of the shift to the running range of the automatic transmission.

4.

The engine control device as defined in Claim 1, wherein the second predetermined period is greater than a period from the shift to a running range of the automatic transmission until the output torque of the automatic transmission stabilizes if it is assumed that the engine output torque has not increased to the second output torque.

5.

The engine control device as defined in Claim 1, wherein the predetermined

correction gain for the engine output torque increases with an increase in the engine rotation speed before the shift in the shift lever position from the stationary range position to the running range position.

6.

The engine control device as defined in Claim 1, wherein the controller is further programmed to set the predetermined correction gain in response to auxiliary device load of operated auxiliary devices.

7.

The engine control device as defined in Claim 1, wherein the first output torque is an output torque of the engine during idling.

8.

An engine control device for a vehicle, the vehicle having an engine, an automatic transmission receiving an output torque of the engine, a drive shaft for transmitting an output torque from the automatic transmission to the vehicle wheels and a shift lever for selecting the operating range of the automatic transmission; wherein the operating range of the automatic transmission includes a stationary range in which the engine output torque is not transmitted to a side of the drive shaft and a running range in which the engine output torque is transmitted to the side of the drive shaft, and a shift lever position includes a stationary range position corresponding to the stationary range of the automatic transmission and a running range position corresponding to the running range of the automatic transmission; the engine control device

comprising:

means for regulating the engine output torque;

means for detecting the shift lever position;

means for detecting a shift in the shift lever position from the stationary range position to the running range position based on the shift lever position; and

means for transmitting a command signal to the torque control mechanism when a first predetermined period elapses after the detection of the shift in the shift lever position, the command signal increasing the engine output torque by a predetermined correction gain from a first output torque at the detection of the shift lever position to a second output torque.

9.

An engine control method for a vehicle, the vehicle having an engine, an automatic transmission receiving an output torque of the engine, a drive shaft for transmitting an output torque from the automatic transmission to the vehicle wheels and a shift lever for selecting the operating range of the automatic transmission; wherein the operating range of the automatic transmission includes a stationary range in which the engine output torque is not transmitted to a side of the drive shaft and a running range in which the engine output torque is transmitted to the side of the drive shaft, and a shift lever position includes a stationary range position corresponding to the stationary range of the automatic transmission and a running range position corresponding to the running range of the automatic transmission; the engine control method comprising:

detecting the shift lever position;

detecting a shift in the shift lever position from the stationary range position to the running range position based on the shift lever position; and

transmitting a command signal to a torque control mechanism when a first predetermined period elapses after the detection of the shift in the shift lever position, the command signal increasing the engine output torque by a predetermined correction gain from a first output torque at the detection of the shift lever position to a second output torque, wherein the torque control mechanism includes at least one of a fuel injector for injecting fuel and a throttle valve for regulating an intake air amount to the engine.